

REMARKS

This Amendment is responsive to the Office Action mailed on August 25, 2006 ("Office Action"). By this Amendment, Applicants have amended Claims 1, 17, 29-31, and 33 and have added new Claims 34-42. Applicants have also made minor revisions to the specification and to Figure 1.

The additions to independent Claims 1 and 17 are supported, e.g., by paragraphs 0030 and 0040, and by original claims 13 and 26 of the application as originally filed. The additions to independent Claim 29 are supported, e.g., by paragraphs 0049-0052 and Figs. 4 and 5. The newly added dependent claims are supported at, for example, paragraphs 0022, 0040 and 0049-0052, and by original Claims 13 and 26. Applicants respectfully submit that no new matter has been added by this Amendment.

The issues raised in the Office Action are addressed below.

Objection to the Drawings

The Examiner objected to the drawings because the number "38" in Figure 1 does not point to the query server as the specification indicates. In response, Applicants are submitting a replacement drawing sheet which changes the erroneously-placed reference number to "34" (see "objections to specification" below), and which adds "38" to the query server.

Objections to the Specification

The Examiner objected to the specification because the reference character "35" has been used to designate both the end user computing devices and a database. Applicants have corrected this error by changing "database 35" to "database 34" throughout the specification, and by adding reference number 34 to Figure 1.

The Examiner also objected to the specification because certain trademarks were not accompanied by a trademark symbol. Applicants have added the trademark symbols where applicable.

The Examiner further objected to the specification as missing a period in paragraph 0030. Applicants note that paragraph 26, rather than paragraph 30, had the missing period. Applicants have added the missing period.

Applicants have also amended the specification at paragraph 0039 to fix a typographical error by adding the word “lowest.” This amendment is supported, e.g., by the recitation of “lowest” later in the same sentence.

Claim Objections

In response to the Examiner’s objection, Applicants have also corrected the typographical errors in Claims 30, 31, and 33.

Art-based rejections

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-3, 6-13, 15-26, 28-30 and 32-33 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Malpani (U.S. Publication No. 2004/0260677), and rejected the remaining claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Malpani in view of Hosken (U.S. Pat. 6,438,579).

Malpani discloses a classification component for locating appropriate categories that apply to a user’s search query. The classification component uses various sources of information, including query traffic, to detect relationships between particular search queries and particular categories. See ¶ 0046. Hosken discloses a system that uses a combination of content-based filtering and collaborative filtering to select media content items, such as music items, to recommend to users.

As amended, each independent claim recites limitations that are not taught or suggested by the references. For example, with respect to independent Claim 1, Malpani and Hosken do not teach or suggest “assessing a degree to which a search query submission event and a category access event of a common user are associated.” Malpani discloses the analysis of search query submissions and category access events to detect relationships between particular search queries and categories. However, nothing in the reference suggests that this analysis includes an assessment of a degree to which a particular search query submission event and a particular category access event are associated. Because Malpani fails to take such information into consideration, the relationships detected via Malpani’s process are less likely to be reliable. Hosken does not address this deficiency.

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With respect to independent Claim 17, Malpani and Hosken do not teach or suggest an analysis component that "takes into consideration, for purposes of identifying said associations, amounts of time spent by users between particular search query submissions and particular selection actions." Nothing in Malpani (or Hosken) suggests taking this information into consideration.

With respect to independent Claim 29, Malpani and Hosken do not teach or suggest "generating a data value that represents a degree of association between the set of search criteria and the item category, said data value reflecting whether the user selected said category link on the search results page." In connection with these limitations, nothing in the references suggests a data value that reflects whether a user selected a category link on a search results page, particularly in the context of the other limitations of the claim.

Because each independent claim recites limitations that are not taught or suggested by the references, all of the pending claims are patentably distinct from the references. Additional distinctions are recited in the dependent claims, including the new dependent claims added by this Amendment.

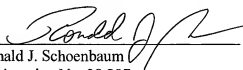
Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance. If any issues remain which can potentially be resolved by telephone, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney of record at his direct dial number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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